GPDE 5256A Wikis, Podcasts, and Online Learning for K-12 Classrooms

St. Mary’s University GPDE 5256

Implementation Plan

Becky Prom

Part I

During this six-week course, I have learned much more about technologies from websites, articles, videos and peers. I am amazed at the endless amount of information that can be accessed in a matter of seconds. I was browsing on Google looking for an article about 21st Century Learners, when I clicked onto an article within an article. I kept on clicking and went from site to site, and article to article. I found myself saving more and more information and soon couldn’t keep track of it all. Technology is improving and changing faster than I can keep up with it. I am constantly learning about new web tools, games, applications, etc. that I can use in my classroom.

“Our children and youth are immersed in technologies that give them opportunities no previous generation has enjoyed. How will schools respond?”(Rosen, 2011). I try to take in and remember as much as I can about technology, but it doesn’t come easy for me. I rely heavily on tutorials and peers to help me figure things out when I am stuck. As a teacher, I feel the pressure of being the “expert” in the technologies that we are using in my classroom. I have to remember that this generation was born with technology, and it is not a new thing to them. I need to embrace the fact that they catch on faster than me. They have been able to connect to the Internet their whole lives. Last year, I was reviewing the different reference books with my fourth grade classroom of thirty-one students. Over half of them did not know what an encyclopedia looked like and what it was used for. I remember feeling shocked, and went on to teach them how to use it. But, after reading numerous articles during this course, I now understand why. Internet has been around for nine or ten years, the same age as my students, and they can Google anything they want to learn about. They don’t need encyclopedias, dictionaries, or any other reference book if they have the Internet. When I get back to my classroom this fall, I am going to toss all of my dictionaries that have taken so much room on my shelves. My class is going to use their computer and do a Google search to look up words or information from now on.

“Teachers needn't master all the new technologies. They should continue doing what they do best: leading discussion in the classroom. But they must find ways to incorporate into those discussions the information and knowledge that their students acquire outside class in their digital lives” (Prensky, 2006). I was feeling pressure to “master” the latest technologies so that I would feel comfortable using it with my students in the classroom. After reading the article, “Learning in a Digital Age”, I have come to realize that I will never “master” the newest technologies because it is changing and improving daily. I love to lead discussions in my classroom and I can’t wait to be a learner amongst my students this coming school year. I have always been open and upfront with my students about my technology disability and they have always been so willing to help me when they can. Now, I will embrace the fact that they are fluent and I am an immigrant in technology.

I have a SMART interactive white board in my classroom that I use on a daily basis. I browse SMART Exchange to find activities and lessons to go along with my curriculum. I also search You Tube for quick clips to show my students. Searching You Tube is a fabulous resource, but I often worry about inappropriate advertisements popping up after the video ends. During this course, I have learned how to save the You Tube video clip that I want my students to view using Keepvid. I also learned how to save my video clips onto Google Docs for future use. I will continue to create and improve my SMART lessons using You Tube, Teacher Exchange, Pinterest, and others. According to Rosen, (2011) “The point is not to “teach with technology” but to use technology to convey content more powerfully and efficiently.” My hope and dream for my teaching this coming year is to use my SMART interactive white board and other technologies to enhance and engage my students as well as improve my lessons.

“The goals of 21st century learning in the elementary classroom are helping each child communicate, collaborate, and exercise creativity and critical thinking while both consuming and producing content that connects them with their world in ways that are personally meaningful and relevant”(Jukes, 2013). The mission statement changed recently in my school, and focuses on the 4 C’s. I strongly believe that 21st century learners need to be supported in their educational journey through Collaboration, Communication, Critical and Creative thinking. We need to guide students to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in our ever-changing society. After reading chapter 1 in, The Global Achievement Gap, by Tony Wagner, I felt like our school was heading in the right direction with its mission statement. I was not surprised, but frustrated to hear that our schools today are not preparing our students for jobs in the future. “ It turns out that asking good questions, critical thinking, and problem solving go hand in hand in the minds of most employers and business consultants”(Wagner, 2008). Guiding student learning using the 4 C’s and moving them up to the top of Bloom’s pyramid will allow them to create, evaluate and analyze. It will help them ask good questions and eventually get jobs that pay higher than minimum wage and become active citizens in the twenty-first century.

Part II

I am very excited to begin this 2013-14 school year by implementing three new web tools into my classroom for my students to utilize. I have dabbled in Story Jumper with my class last year, but would like to allow more time with it this year. I also want to introduce my students to Google Chrome. I would like students to use some of the applications available with this search engine. Lastly, I would like to introduce my students to the website called Spelling City. I would like them to use this site as one of their daily 5 choices.

I have ten laptop computers in my classroom for student use and our school has a computer lab available for checkout. Because of this accessibility, I am going to start the school year off by introducing Story Jumper to my students. It is a free online program that allows students to create a story by selecting scenes, props, photos, adding text, and sharing. There is even an option of sharing the books with family members and ordering them for a fee.

I introduced Story Jumper to my students for the first time last year. I did not have computers in my classroom, so the only time students could work on their stories was when we reserved the computer lab. Most of the class completed only the one story that I assigned, but did not have a chance to create more. I was able to view students’ work and provide feedback, but my students did not get too many opportunities to go back into the lab to edit their work.

For this upcoming school year, I am going to use the Story Jumper-Classroom Edition. It will allow me to set up an account and create a virtual classroom link where I can add my whole class, giving each student a username and a password. I will assign my students their class number as a screen name and choose the same password for everyone to make it easy for them to remember. Before we begin, I will print out a teacher class roster and individual student sheets with screen names and passwords for students to glue into their writing notebook. Prior to my students logging in each time, I will have to set a duration time for how long I want the site available for my students. I usually set it for two hours incase we get a late start in the computer lab. When the two hours are up, the system will automatically save all student work and log all of the students out. I remember wondering about this feature and them after students forgot to log out or save their work, it was priceless. I didn’t have to worry about other students accessing my students’ accounts. The only time this was an issue is when I had students work at different times of the day. I remember having to go back onto my computer and changing the duration every time students wanted to use this site. I ended up setting the duration time only if we were in the computer lab, and allowing unlimited time when we were working in the classroom.

Fourth grade students do a number of different writings during the year. My goal is to have them publish a minimum of 5 writing pieces during the school year using Story Jumper. They will receive feedback from me as often as I can and be allowed ample time to revise and edit their work. My hope is that by the end of the school year, after many mini lessons and teacher feedback, my students’ writing and creativity will improve. I want them to take pride in their writing and to really want to make improvements to their stories. My goal is to have students use Story Jumper during reading/writing daily 5 at least three times per week. Students will be able to use the program to read other stories that were created if they are not creating their own. This could help them get ideas and practice their reading.

My school district uses Google Chrome as a search engine. I would like my students to become familiar with some of the programs/applications that are easily accessed using it. I would like my students to be able to login to their g-mail account and receive and send e-mails. One of our class projects in Social Studies is to collect a postcard from all fifty states. In the past, students had to write a letter to a friend or relative from around the country asking them to send a postcard from their state. It took time to write the letters and send them out in the mail. It was also costly, as I had to pay for postage. This year, I would like my students to e-mail a friend or relative using their Gmail account. It will cut down on the time it takes to get the postcards back and is free. Maybe we could collect a few postcards from around the world too!

I would also like my students to become familiar with Google Docs. It is a Web-based application in which students can use it to create documents and spreadsheets with the ability to store and share them online. Students can edit a shared document at the same time and even access it from home if they have Internet. During social studies, I will have small groups working together creating documents to share with me using Google Docs. I want all of my students to be able to contribute to group projects, and this tool seems like a great way to allow that to happen. Google Search can also be utilized as a tool to search for information to use in their work.

Spelling City is a free educational website with over twenty different learning activities. Some of the activities used most by my students are: unscramble, word search, and spelling test. I can customize word lists from my spelling program for my students to access. Students can use these word lists in a variety of games and activities. I am planning on using this website as one of my daily 5 choices. I use a spelling program called, Words Their Way. I may have six different spelling groups in my classroom each with different lists and it’s difficult for me to meet with each group individually during the week to check on them. Most of the activities from Spelling City can be printed out for student use. This would help free up the computer faster for someone else to use. Spelling City works well on interactive whiteboards, which is very engaging for students. They love using the SMART board for any activity. Students can login to Spelling City and take practice or post test on the computer. This is helpful as an informal assessment. Sometimes students think they know how to spell the words from their list and are surprised when the test comes around and they misspell a few. It is convenient having students take a practice test, so that they know which words they missed.

Part III

I am looking forward to implementing these Web 2.0 tools into my classroom this upcoming school year. To determine the effectiveness of each tool, I will be using teacher observations, formative/summative assessments, and student reflections.

Students will be introduced to Story Jumper at the end of September and will continue editing and adding new pieces to it for the duration of the year. I will be able to login and view all of my students’ stories. I plan on giving students individual feedback and whole/small group mini lessons to guide them through the writing process. I will collect a writing sample from the beginning of the year and compare it a sample from the end of the year to show growth. I will use a writing rubric to grade the pieces and will go over it with students along with many writing samples for them to look at. Students will also be able to collaborate with each other and give each other feedback on their stories.

Students will be collaborating, creating and sharing documents using Google Docs. They will also be assigned a username and password to login to their g-mail. Students will receive a label to glue onto the inside cover of their writing notebook. It will have their username, password, and any other login information that they need on it. I expect my students to be able to login independently, and send and receive e-mails. They will be demonstrating their e-mailing ability during a social studies project. After studying the regions of the United States, we have a postcard contest. The goal is to receive one postcard from all fifty states. In place of writing a friendly letter, students will be e-mailing friends or relatives asking them to send our class a postcard from their state. I will use a writing rubric to assess this assignment.

I expect my students to create, share and save documents on Google Docs independently by the end of fourth grade. Students collaborate often in social studies and science. I would like them to use Google Docs to create a few group projects so that they can easily edit, share and save their work. I am going to start out the year with the goal of having my students using Google Docs once a month, but I can envision a future of having no more lost packets or worksheets because it will all be saved online. I can’t wait for that day to come! Informative assessment through teacher observation, student reflections, and activities will be my tool to measure student growth.

Spelling City website will be utilized by my students as one of their daily 5 choices. I can customize word lists from my spelling program for students to access at home or in school. I will use it as a formative assessment tool to help differentiate student spelling. Students will be able to practice their word list using numerous activities and take their end of the week test on the computer.

Part IV

Web 2.0 tools are constantly improving and changing. I have been doing a lot of reflecting on the overwhelming amount of information that I have heard, read, and viewed during this six-week course. I am excited but anxious to start my web 2.0 tech implementation plan this coming school year. As Prensky (2006) points out, “Most people from our generation and our parents’ generation are not from the digital generation. We don’t speak digital as a first language.” I admit that I am an “immigrant” to technology, but like most immigrants, I will adapt and get more fluent as time goes on.

“Every teacher has 30-35 technology experts sitting in their classroom.  Quite often all they have to do is be willing to show themselves as learners and ask” (Wood, 2010). I’m not afraid to be a co-learner in my classroom from time to time. After reading that quote, I will embrace and will be a co-learner along with my students. I will also continue taking staff development courses in technology and utilize my peers for help. If I look back a few years, I have come along way. I feel more comfortable trying new applications and tools, but am still a little hesitant. With support, I will be fluent someday!

“It’s not about the amount of technology you have or the size and dimension of your classroom, it’s about finding the right tools that you can adapt to your needs and fully integrate into your lessons to make learning relevant and timely” (Stevens, 2011). I am not going to just “add on” new technologies to my existing curriculum, but find out what technologies will work to richen it. I want my 21st Century learners to deepen their understandings of the content using these tools and technologies.

.

References

Jukes, I (2013). What Does 21st Century Learning Look Like in an Elementary School?. Retrieved from

<http://fluency21.com/blog/2013/06/18/what-does-21st-century-learning-look-like-in-an-elementary-school/>

Prensky, M. (2005, 2006) Listen to the natives. *Learning the Digital Age, 63*, 8-13.

Rosen, L. (2011). Teaching the iGeneration. *Teaching Screenagers, 68,* 10-15.

Stevens, M. (2011) The 21st-century learner is here–is your classroom ready? *21st-Century Learner Create! Communicate! Collaborate!* Retrieved from

<http://www.nea.org/home/46989.htm>

Wagner, Tony. (2008) The Global Achievement Gap.

Retrieved from Chapter 1: The New World of Work and the Seven Survival Skills

Wood, J. (2010) Rewiring Education & Connecting with the iGeneration. Retrieved from

<http://www.joewoodonline.com/rewiring-education-connecting-with-the-igeneration/>